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Le'ale'a O Na Poe Kahiko - Joy of the People of Old Hawai'i

Amy Marsh, DHS, ACS, CHt

Editor's note: I think it is very appropriate to publish this article on Valentine's Day, when we celebrate Love.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to European contact, the islands of Hawai'i nourished a vibrant, sexually joyous culture which supported the development of competent skills for healthy and pleasurable sex. *Na poe kahiko* (the people of old) experienced intimacy and pleasure within the context of spiritual and community kinship. "Hawai'i knew sex in its gamut, from union in deep love, to intercourse specifically for procreation, to the sheer excitement of physical attraction, tension and release" (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). I believe the *Kanaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiians) created a culture which encouraged most people to gain sophisticated understanding of sexual matters and to become skillful in their attentiveness to intimate relationships.

Though the people and communities of the various islands had some regional differences in customs and language, it is probably safe to make the following general statements.

Erotic awareness and expression seem to have been integral to most aspects of life. Pleasure was enjoyed in harmony with *na akua* (male and female gods and other spiritual beings), the land ('aina), family life ('ohana), and the 'aikapu religion. Sexuality and intimacy were celebrated in chants (*oli*), dances (*hula*), place names, stories and genealogies. Even landscape features were imbued with erotic (and spiritual) significance. The Hawaiian language ('olelo Hawai'i) was rich in words and phrases which describe states of desire and acts of love with nuance and variety. For example, "unrestrained desire" was called *kuko 'umi 'ole* and "the ultimate physical union" was called *hope loa koko'olua kino* (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). Intimacy, not usually enacted ritualistically (as far as we know), was known to include communion with self, beloved, and the natural and spiritual realms (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

European contact is usually dated by Capt. James Cook's arrival in 1778, though some people believe European and Asian voyagers arrived prior to Cook (1728-1779). Christian missionaries arrived in 1820. Before Western influences damaged the culture almost beyond repair, life in Hawaiian communities usually included the following features:

Wide range of intimate relationships. Socially acceptable intimate relationships included plural mating (and shared responsibility for children of these unions), *aikane* (same sex) relationships, *kane o ka po* and *wahine o ka po* spirit lovers, and the non-sexual but emotionally tender *kane ho'okane* and *wahine ho'owahine* (Pukui, 1999). The *Kanaka Maoli* even had a social framework for people who shared a mate or long-term lover - the *punalua* relationship - which created the emotional and practical equivalent of familial ties (Pukui, 1999).

Pleasure skills. Children and youth observed and were taught sexual and interpersonal skills to prepare them for intimate relationships (Pukui, 1999). Skillful lovers were admired, and lazy or inconsiderate lovers were ridiculed (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). The *ma'i* (genitals) were considered sacred due to their role in creating new life, however other fragments of language, dance, chants, and legends also indicate possible evidence of a sophisticated tradition of sacred sexual practices (Marsh 2010, Jensen and Jensen, 2005). Such practices may have been reserved for the rulers (*ali'i*) and priesthood, or they may have been available to the common people (*maka'ainana*) as well. The existence of a sacred sexual tradition in Hawai'i is tantalizing, but speculative.

Erotic expression. As mentioned before, the Hawaiian language is rich in romantic nuance and words and phrases which express deep (and playful) insight into human sexual behavior. Elements of what we might term "eroticism" permeated the culture through social relationships, spiritual concepts, language, place names, songs and chants, dance, and other cultural practices and artifacts. However, the Western concept and practice of separating the "erotic" from other aspects of life does not apply to Hawaiian culture. For the old Hawaiians, it is more likely that all aspects of life - including sex - were entwined, sacred, and whole.

Framework for Sexological Exploration

My framework for sexological exploration of the traditions of Old Hawai'i are based on the work of the late [Dr. Loretta Haroian](#). I have adapted her concepts of "sexually permissive, sexually supportive, sexually restrictive, and sexually repressive" cultures, which she originally described in the context of a lecture and monograph on child sexual development: "Sexually permissive cultures not only allow a less fettered expression of adult sexuality, but may give little attention to the sexual behaviors of children as long as they are not blatantly displayed. Sexually supportive cultures, believing that sex is indispensable to human happiness, encourage early sexual expression as a means of developing adult sexual competency and positive sexual attitudes. The children in sexually permissive and sexually supportive societies display a similar developmental pattern that is not apparent in sexually restrictive and sexually repressive societies." In a lecture taped for the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, Dr. Haroian defined sexually supportive societies as those which build capacities for intimacy and pleasure in its citizens.

I have added my own concept of the "sexually conflicted culture" which I see as the result of acculturation in a clash between sex-positive and sex-negative societies, particularly during periods of invasion, occupation and/or colonization, and processes of assimilation (instigated by the sex-negative society). In Hawai'i's case, all expressions of indigenous eros were first shamed and suppressed, then appropriated, distorted, commodified, and even *adopted in distorted form* by the Western invaders and their descendants, meanwhile alienating generations of Maoli from their intimate heritage and forcing them into sexual and religious conformity with the invaders' purported standards.

Western Influences and History

For the purposes of this article, I use the word "Western" to encompass all influences we generally acknowledge as coming from European, American and Judeo-Christian history and traditions. The

specific secondary influences of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and Portuguese (etc.) immigrants and culture are outside the scope of this document, though they add to the complexity of contemporary sexual attitudes and behavior and further complicate this topic - particularly as so many people of varied ethnicity have intermarried in Hawai'i. The focus is mainly on the culture and customs of *KanakaMaoli* (whether or not they eventually had mixed ancestry and family ties).

In Hawai'i, western influences were seldom (if ever) wholly positive. Hawaiians had no immunity to Western diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of people died as a direct result of Capt. Cook's voyages to Hawai'i. Westerners brought destructive technologies; a stern and oppressive religion; and customs like prostitution and private property. They imported invasive foreign species which continue to wreak havoc on the fragile island ecosystem. Western business interests imported foreign laborers who brought still more diseases and new epidemics. When in positions of power or influence, Westerners outlawed or refused to recognize many kinds of cherished intimate relationships. Missionaries advocated suppression and criminalization of many Hawaiian customs, including hula and traditional healing. During the time of annexation, the United States even outlawed the language.

It is important to understand Hawaiian culture within the context of its history and the country's current political predicament. What follows is a very brief summary, and in the interest of brevity, I pass over many important topics and events.

Shortly after Capt. Cook's death, a high-ranking warrior and chief of Hawai'i island, *Kamehameha I* (1758-1819), made strategic use of Western ships and weaponry which had fallen like sweet ripe fruit into his hands. With this new advantage, the ambitious Kamehameha fought a number of battles with other chiefs on neighboring islands (1795-1810). Eventually he brought them all under his rule. This is commonly known as "unification" of the islands, but Kamehameha's acts of conquest are not universally admired. I have heard that his deeds still rankle with some descendants of people he battled or conquered.

Even so, the golden potential of a unified Hawai'i was rapidly eroded by increasing contact with Western visitors, speculators, and missionaries. Too much happened to the Maoli, much too quickly. After Kamehameha's death, Western influences ascended as two of his wives and one son, *Liholiho*, now Kamehameha II (1797-1824), deliberately broke with centuries of spiritual tradition by sitting down and sharing a meal together. Many *heiau* (temples) were destroyed and bitter and bloody clashes followed. In a decisive battle at *Kuamo'o* (1819, Kona district, Hawai'i island), the bodies and bones (*na 'iwi*) of people who fought in vain to save their traditions were left exposed to the elements - the ultimate insult.

By 1840, another son, King Kamehameha III (*Kauikaouli*, 1813-1854), shifted the governance of Hawai'i from the old system of absolute chiefly rule (which he himself had enjoyed) to that of a modern, constitutional monarchy. This was an action designed to preserve the kingdom from political seizure, by creating the type of modern government that would be recognized and protected by international laws and treaties. From the start, the Kingdom of Hawai'i was a multiethnic nation consisting of *KanakaMaoli* and an assortment of naturalized immigrants. By the time of King *Kalakaua* (1836-1891), Hawai'i was a declared neutral nation in the League of Nations and had treaties with fifty other countries, including the United States.

King *Kalakaua* and his sister, Queen *Liliu'okalani* (1838-1917), who would be the last monarch of the kingdom, both tried to redress some of the wrongs done to *Kanaka Maoli* citizens and to restore some of the rights taken from them during decades of foreign influence. During her reign, *Liliu'okalani* proposed a revision of a very unfair constitution, which had been forced upon her brother at bayonet point by American businessmen and missionary descendants. These same men felt threatened by her action, and in 1893, engineered an overthrow of the queen. They were aided by the American minister to Hawai'i and the military power of a United States naval ship. The Queen expected the U.S. president, Grover Cleveland, to restore the kingdom's sovereignty (an expectation based on a similar incident with England in the mid-1800s), but restoration never occurred.

The so-called annexation of Hawai'i by the United States in 1898, was imposed without the legal requirement of a nation-to-nation treaty. This domestic resolution was passed and implemented against the wishes of the majority of the citizens of the occupied Hawaiian kingdom, who protested annexation through the “*Ku'e Petitions*” and other actions (Silva, 2004). Even Hawai'i's so-called “statehood” is questionable under international law, and looks to be the result of election fraud (Sai) . The Clinton administration Apology Resolution (1993) admitted and apologized for the *hewa* (great wrong) of the overthrow, and recognized that Native Hawaiians had never relinquished their sovereignty. However, the rights of other descendants of Hawaiian nationals - who were also deprived of their country and citizenship - have yet to be addressed.

Hawai'i nei (beloved Hawai'i) and the descendants of Hawaiian nationals (which include both *Kanaka Maoli* and immigrant citizens) still suffer the effects of continued occupation and denial of the kingdom's sovereignty. However, the story of the Hawaiian islands is not just that of political, economic, and cultural conquest, but also that of a sexually positive and supportive culture all but destroyed by a sexually repressive one.

Sexual Repression

Sexual repression was and is a significant aspect of cultural genocide in Hawai'i. The sex-positive aspects of indigenous cultures are among the first to be obliterated by sexually repressive colonizers. As mentioned previously, Maoli considered sexual activity to be “pleasure-filled, guilt free, but with responsibility for possible offspring”(Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Western sailors and whalers introduced sex with a penalty - the experience of venereal disease - as well as the concepts of “sex for pay, ‘dirty’ sex, prostitution” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Missionaries introduced the concepts of “adultery, fornication, illegitimate child, bigamy, harlotry, lewdness, carnal intercourse, and the blanket concept that covered all these ideas, sin” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Shame is a socially transmitted infection, and sexual shame is a powerful tool of conquest. Sexual exploitation and violence inevitably follow.

According to Nyrell Pattel, founder and director of The Australian First Nations Academy for Cultural Family Therapy and Counseling, the widespread repression of colonialism and belligerent occupation creates detrimental effects on the physical and mental health of indigenous individuals and communities. According to Pattel (2007), these effects compound and intensify in each generation. Though her work is grounded in her own experiences as an Aboriginal woman and in her therapeutic work with the Aboriginal community, Pattel's concepts and conclusions are to some extent parallel to or applicable to contemporary Maoli in Hawai'i. (And probably too many other communities as well.)

In Conquest - Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide (2005), Andrea Smith documents generations of sexual violence inflicted on the indigenous people of North America, particularly that which continues to be inflicted on women and children. However, Smith is suspicious of recent attempts to market Native American “Spiritual Sexuality” workshops, even when these events are created by other Native people, such as the “self-described Cherokee,” Harley Swiftdeer. In a chapter called “Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence,” which should be read by every sexologist who desires to delve into the sexual traditions of indigenous people, Smith declares, “this sexual colonization of Native spirituality cloaks itself in the rhetoric of resistance to colonization.” She particularly objects to the stereotype of Native people “constantly equated with nature, which is in turn equated with unbridled sexuality.”

Using Dr. Haroian's categories, I might venture to describe this as the stereotype that is always perceived and perpetuated by members of sexually repressive and negative cultures. Such people will always interpret sexually supportive (competent) societies as “permissive” - unbridled, wild, savage, close to nature, without rules. This is because they have no understanding of sexual competency because there is no support for this in their own culture. Because they lack sexual finesse and knowledge, such people are unable to recognize the fine points of sexual behavior, enjoyed by people in sexually competent cultures. They do not recognize their own conflicted, unbridled excitement, instead projecting these qualities on the “other.” Thus, the sex-negative colonizer is at best crudely

inept, and at worst, apt to commit sexual violence.

Acculturation - the cultural changes that result from “continuous, firsthand contact between two distinct groups” (Rezentes, 1996) is a traumatic process, especially when it involves absorbing fundamentally negative concepts and consequences, such as the above sex-negative concepts inflicted on the Maoli by Westerners. It is now understood that acculturation can cause problems for individuals as well as for entire groups (Rezentes, 1996), and in the case of indigenous or aboriginal people, trauma experienced by one member of the group is likely to have an adverse effect on other individuals as well (Pattel, 2007). In other words, the effects of occupation, colonization and acculturation are messy and complex and cannot be neatly compartmentalized or dealt with using Western therapeutic models.

Giving over to cultural appropriation seems to be an integral part of the acculturation process demanded by colonizing powers. Appropriation usually results in distortion of a cultural element, and often the commoditization of it. As a writer and researcher, I am aware that I walk a fine line between appreciation and appropriation. I have learned (the hard way) that the ardent enthusiast might forget to ask permission before flinging her love at the objects of her affection. And if the objects of affection happen to be suffering from the effects of continued occupation or colonization, this type of behavior is rightfully resented - for these folks haven't been given the opportunity to say, “thanks, but no thanks.” And so I ask myself, at what point could my attendance at a hula class become a distortion? At what point has my enthusiasm been grabby? Where have I overstepped my bounds and rushed in where people with better manners have feared to tread? Sometimes enthusiasts go too far. Andrea Smith says “playing Indian is part of an ongoing genocidal project where white people become the inheritors of all that Indians ‘knew.’” (She is referencing an article by Rayna Green, “The Tribe Called Wannabee.”) Ref?

I include personal soul searching as it is necessary to approach this topic with as little distortion as possible. So I bring a multitude of “lenses” to this subject, and the magnifying lens of own shortcomings are among them. I also have a pair of old-time binoculars which I aim at Hawai’i - since I live so far away. The ones I wear most often are my rose-colored, sexologist glasses. They happen to be bifocal. The secondary lens is that of a sexual abuse survivor. So naturally the tale of Hawai’i’s last few centuries reads to me like one long, ongoing rape.

I suggest that the sexual trauma inflicted on the Maoli, first through the epidemic of venereal diseases caused by sex with Western sailors and later compounded by punitive missionary concepts of sin (and the commodification of the Hawaiian eros), continues to be a deep, pervasive, multigenerational *battering* of the Maoli soul, with blows aimed directly at the foundations of their culture. And I ask myself, how does one begin to effect the sexual healing of an entire people?

The renaissance of Hawaiian culture encompasses far more than a renewal of arts and demands for sovereignty. Renewal is nourished by deep inquiry into the nature of all things Hawaiian. Manulani Aluli Meyer, Ed.D, is one who emphasizes the practical and intellectual reality of “Hawaiian epistemology”. In a talk given in Aotearoa in 2000, she said, “the idea of sensuality helps me step outside the box of my colonial context and brings me to the sights, sounds, smells, touches and tastes of a deeper experience of this world” (Meyer, 2004).

It seems to me that here is the secret to healing. If each person cultivated the capacity to be present to her, his, or hir senses, we would all be better lovers - and better citizens. This must surely be useful to members of both the victimized and the victimizing cultures. There could be no need to “diss,” envy, appropriate, distort or destroy another person’s sexuality or culture when the present moment is capable of providing all that is desirable.

This brings me back to a conviction I have that the human body itself provides the template for renewal and even, I dare say, for sexual transcendence. It is the original teacher of all practices which lead to an experience of “sacred sex” and transcendent intimacy. I’ll return to this topic later.

These cultural concepts are important to understanding the forms of erotic and intimate expression and customs of Hawai'i. An insight into Hawaiian language is offered by Jensen and Jensen (2005): "Hawaiian words are thought phrases and go beyond single word interpretation. If we must study the culture through its language, then we must take that journey outside the scope of ordinary experience."

Unless otherwise indicated, all definitions of the following Hawaiian words are taken from or paraphrased from the Hawaiian-English Dictionary (Pukui and Elbert, 1985). (Also, because this paper is not typed in a Hawaiian language font, some Hawaiian words are missing a crucial pronunciation mark, the kahako, which adds stress and emphasis to vowels, and which can change the meanings of certain words. I apologize for this lack.)

Aloha (Love, Affection, Tenderness)

Westerners tend to trivialize, misuse and misunderstand this word (as well as mispronounce it -- one does not say, "aloooooooooha" like a cheesy MC at a tourist *lu'au*). They have even twisted the concept subtly against the ire of Kanaka Maoli (with regard to their loss of country and culture), much as the "model minority" stereotype has been used to steer Asian-Americans into polite conformity. I sometimes picture a fictitious *New Yorker* cartoon of a disgruntled American tourist grumbling into his tropical cocktail, "where's my damn aloha?" In other words, missing the point entirely.

In workshops, *Ho'oponopono* teacher, Ramsay Taum, explains aloha as meaning "face to face with the breath of life" (*alo* - face to face, *ha* - breath). This conveys a deep awareness of connection, as well as acknowledgment of environmental reality. The dictionary explains aloha as encompassing love, affection, compassion, grace, charity, fondness, and veneration. Aloha also serves as a greeting.

Mea aloha is a loved one or lover. *Aloha pumehana* is warm affection. *Aloha 'aina* is the love of land, particularly of beloved Hawai'i, and this deserves an entire category as a cultural foundation - as the land and beings of the land are in familial relationship with Maoli.

To be *aloha 'ole* is to be merciless, without love or affection. (This is a quality that has been well demonstrated by United States in all of its multiple interventions in Hawaiian affairs and its impact on the 'aina.)

Aloha is an inner gesture of good faith directed out into the world. It invites dialogue and reciprocity.

Ho'oipoipo (Lovemaking)

Ipo is the word for sweetheart. *Ipo ahi* is an ardent lover (*ahi* means fiery). *Ipo laua'e* is a sweet-natured lover. *Ho'o* makes nouns into verbs, so *ho'oipo* or *ho'oipoipo* is to court, woo, or make love. These words also encompass romance and tenderness. A *pili ho'oipoipo* is a love affair.

Ho'okela o ka ho'oipoipo means fantastic lovemaking. A *mele ho'oipoipo* is a love song. However "whore monger" (a Western, missionary concept) has been translated into the phrase *ka poe ho'oipoipo* (*ka poe* means the person).

In a conversation which took place in Hilo on August 13, 2008, Dr. Manu Meyer suggested that Western terms like "sex" and "sexuality" had less to do with the Maoli concept of intimacy. She said I should be asking Maoli for their definitions of and feelings about *ho'oipoipo*. In contrast, while I was giving a lecture on this topic at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (also 2008), a fellow institute instructor said he wanted to know more about "the fucking." My sense is that even aside from the repressive influences of Christianity, most Maoli will still choose to express themselves with a degree of nuance, *kaona* (multiple meanings), and emotional content when speaking of love and physical intimacy. And I believe they will also take their time when doing so.

A Kinsey-like sex research approach, for example, would probably be unsuccessful in the Maoli community as being "too *haole*" (Western or white) - in other words, too direct and explicit, as well as

one-sided and “pushy.” Sex research interviews with contemporary Maoli would have to be completely redesigned and conducted in an entirely different way, within an atmosphere of a truly trustworthy *exchange*, resulting from a sincere relationship.

‘Ike and Mana’o (Knowledge and Thoughts)

The meaning of ‘*ike* encompasses sight and other senses, knowledge, sexual knowing, recognition, perception, divine revelations, understanding, experience, and awareness. *Ho’ike* is to inform, report, display, reveal and so on.

Mana’o is “thought, idea, belief, opinion, theory, thesis, intention, meaning, suggestion, mind and desire.” Note the root word, *mana*. *Ho’omana’o* is to remember, think, reflect or meditate.

Kali (Vagina)

This is one of my most interesting Hawaiian dictionary discoveries. Vagina is the second meaning of *kali*. The first is to linger or tarry. However, as a Tantra student, I am filled with wonder to find that the same word which names the ancient Hindu goddess, Kali, a powerful archetype of female sexual power (so similar to the Hawaiian goddess, *Pele*), is also - in Hawai’i - a word for the sacred female genitals. Words do travel. Or is this a coincidence?

Kaona (Poetic Hidden Meanings)

The dictionary says that *kaona* is a concealed reference, or “words with double meaning that might bring good or bad fortune.” *Kaona* is the art of layering meanings, hiding some, and hinting at others, making use of metaphor with great skill. *Kaona* still shows up in nuances of everyday conversation, as well as in songs, chants, hula and the stories and legends. The poetry of *kaona* is an element in most expressions of love, whether in song or flirtatious conversation. The use of crude or vulgar language is not a natural feature of either Hawaiian discourse or art, though Hawaiian culture was seldom squeamish.

Hula teachers explain examples of *kaona* in *mele hula* (hula songs) which include references to sea spray, rain and mist in song. The watery element always indicates lovemaking. Flowers and *lei* of flowers are also often used to indicate a lover or feelings about a lover. A famous hula song, “*Papalina Lahilahi*” (Dainty Cheeks) tells the story of an experienced and desirable lover. As a hula, it is danced with a certain amount of sauciness. The following English translation shows why:

I love you and your dainty cheeks,

Always dampened by the sea spray.

What's the reason for hurrying towards me?

You know you're a flower that's been plucked.

Freely given from head to toe

Why the hurry to possess?

I told you before of your dainty cheeks

I'll tell you again I love you.

The “dainty cheeks” of the lover are not literally dampened by sea spray. A more personal fluid is indicated, and the listener is left to wonder which cheeks have been dampened. As for the “flower that’s been plucked,” the meaning is clear. The lover has already been possessed (or has given his or her favors freely), but remains desirable.

I composed the following song, *Ka Ua Nani O Waimea* (The Beautiful Rain of Waimea), to celebrate an important erotic encounter with my lover, Ku. My ukulele teacher, Saichi Kawahara, leader of the Kapalakiko Hawaiian Band, has agreed to compose the music when I have this language checked for accuracy. The kaona of this song is fairly obvious, as my knowledge of and skill with ‘olelo Hawai‘i is rudimentary. I composed it by copying sentence structures of other song.

Ka Ua Nani o Waimea

Ko’u ka maka o ke kanaka o ka mauna,

Ko’u ka maka o ka hoa o ka ula la’au.

Onaona o ka ‘awapuhi.

O ka ua nani o Waimea.

Akaka wale no kau mai ka ohu,

E lei no au i ke aloha.

I manai kau, i pua ho’i ka’u.

He mai he mana, he mai he ola.

He mai he ola i nui ka ikaika.

I nani i ka ikaika, i nani i ka aloha,

O ka ua o Waimea.

Ha’ina ia mai o ka ua nani.

~

The Beautiful Rain of Waimea

My eyes rest upon the man of the mountain.

My eyes rest upon the companion of the forest.

Softly fragrant is the ginger,

In the beautiful rain of Waimea.

Clearly one can see through the mist.

I will wear your love as a wreath.

Yours the needle, mine the flowers.

Extend forth the power, extend forth life.

Extend forth life that great be strength,

Beautiful is the strength, beautiful is the love,

Of the rain of Waimea.

Tell the story of the beautiful rain.

Kaona was also used in the art of *mahu'i*, a way to express sexual desire in metaphor (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). Kaona allowed Maoli to make sexual references and jokes when the “puritanical Westerners” began to learn the language but didn’t know enough to get the in jokes (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Kaona was also a way to further passionate political struggle in Hawaiian language newspapers, particularly around the protests against annexation (Silva, 2004) and the original language was rich, vibrant, eloquent, and often contained sexual metaphors. The act of translating articles and letters of protest into English was in itself an act of censorship. Consequently, the strength and passion of the Hawaiian language of resistance was not conveyed to English-speaking readers.

Kaona can also be an element of action as well as language. For example, on October 11, 1894, Kanaka Maoli protested the imprisonment of their queen and the overthrow of their kingdom with what looked - to Westerners - like an innocent garden party. At this time, Maoli were forbidden to gather in any great numbers, but the authorities allowed a group of high-ranking women (and a handful of men) to tend the queen’s garden, Uluhaimalama (located near Punchbowl, in Honolulu). However, each plant held had special meaning, such as kukui (a symbol of light) and pilimai (a symbol of steadfast support). These plants, put into the earth with special prayers, indicated their support for Queen Lili’uokalani and their commitment to continued resistance,

Kapu (Sacred, Forbidden)

Kapu means “taboo, prohibition; special privilege or exemption from ordinary taboo; sacredness, prohibited, forbidden; sacred, holy, consecrated; no trespassing, keep out.”

With regard to lovemaking, kapu restrictions associated with various female and male chiefs, or ranks of chiefs, could prevent or curtail sexual activities (see *Mana*, below), depending on the rank and status of the prospective partners. There were also kapu that prohibited sexual relations with the *kauwa*, the “slave,” “outcast” or “untouchable” class (Jensen and Jensen, 2005; Pukui and Handy, 1998).

Kapu also governed sexual relations during a woman’s menstrual cycle. Such relations were forbidden, as women sequestered themselves in a special sanctuary, the *Hale Pe’ā*, also known as the *Hale O Papa*, during this time. This retreat to a special place did not mean that women had inferior status. Maoli had strict kapu over all shed blood, as well as other substances such as spittle and fecal matter, which would quickly decay in the tropical climate. These kapu helped to maintain hygiene.

Retreat to the *Hale Pe’ā* served a religious and spiritual purpose as well as a hygienic one. Women used this time to commune with female gods and ancestors (Kame’eleihiwa, 1966). Women suspended their daily activities until menstrual flow ceased and they had taken their purification baths (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). While in the *Hale Pe’ā*, women ate meals brought to them, relaxed on comfortable, soft

mats, and gave each other massages as they talked story, shared memories, and sometimes created new chants and hula movements (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). Women only used their own worn out bark cloth skirts as menstrual pads, never anything that was worn above the waist and never anyone else's cast off clothing (Pukui and Handy, 1998). Pieces of the old skirts would be filled with absorbent *pulu*, silky fibers from a fern, and later buried after use (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). Hawaiians thought conception happened immediately after menstruation so a woman who had just taken her cleansing bath was considered very desirable (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Only close relatives would ever share another person's clothing, and even this sharing had specific rules. Mothers could wear their daughter's clothing, but not the other way around (Pukui and Handy, 1998). Hula teachers still admonish their *haumana* (students) to remove their *pa'u* (skirts) by lifting them over the head, not pulling them down off their hips and legs. *Pa'u* are not supposed to be worn while using the toilet. They are supposed to be removed first. The different sexes are also not supposed to share clothing. Mats used for various purposes must always be used for the same purpose. Sometimes stepping over or on certain mats, such as those used for pillows, was kapu (Pukui and Handy, 1998). These restrictions have to do with containing and managing *mana*.

Important kapu governed eating arrangements. Men and women did not eat together. Little boys ate with their mothers until they were old enough to enter the men's house, the *Hale Mua* (Pukui and Handy, 1998). Men did all the cooking, making separate meals for the women in a separate oven. Certain foods were restricted (see *Kinolau*, below).

Kapu were also used in the management of resources such as fisheries, crops and the gathering of wild plants.

Kinolau (Many Bodies)

The female and male gods of Hawai'i were able to take many forms. This was known as *kinolau*. Kanaka maoli will sometimes say that an animal, such as a *pueo* (owl), *'io* (hawk), or *mano* (shark), are *'aumakua* (ancestors) in their families. They may even tell a friend how such an animal ancestor made an appearance which signaled a significant event or brought a warning in a time of emergency. To Westerners used to thinking of ancestors and genealogies in terms of genetic lineage, this sounds nonsensical, unless one understands that the Maoli trace their genealogies to gods and these gods are also said to be able to take many forms.

Speaking of these forms, and familial relationship to them, Mary Kawena Pukui uses the example of Pele, the volcano goddess, "If Pele is not real to you, then you cannot comprehend the quality of relationship that exists between persons related to and through Pele, and of these persons to the land and phenomena, not "created by" but *which are*, Pele and her clan." In a sense, the tradition of *kaona* is not just an expression of poetic metaphor, but a continuation of the processes and perceptions which sense and respond to the cherished lover *embodied as* the lei, mist, or beautiful flower, just as an ancestor is sensed and responded to while *embodied as* the owl, shark or hawk. This experience of communion with *an embodiment* of the beloved is an important feature of the erotic experiences and expression in Hawai'i.

The concept of *kinolau* is also important to understanding the food restrictions of the 'aikapu religion. Women were not allowed to eat certain foods as they were the *kinolau* of entire male gods or just their genitals.

It is through *kinolau* that male and female gods would also appear to human lovers, in much the same way as the Greek gods of Olympus and other traditions. These kinds of spirit relationships were called *kane o ka po* and *wahine o ka po* (men and women of the night). Pukui tells a story about a woman from the Ka'u district of Hawai'i island, who went to Honolulu to visit and there fell in love with a handsome man who only visited her at night. This man was a *mo'o* (water or dragon spirit). Many times a person engaged in a *o ka po* relationship will become sickly and listless with longing for the spirit lover, and this woman was no different. The right side of her body, which was always in contact

with her lover, became “slimy and pale like a fish’s” (since he was a water spirit) and she became ill enough to alarm her family. An uncle finally exorcised the visitor and the woman returned to Ka’u (Pukui and Handy, 1998). Some o ka po lovers could be helpful, and some destructive.

Sometimes infants were born who looked like the animal spirit of the o ka po lover, and these children either went away by themselves or were taken by a relative to the proper environment (i.e., a child who looked like a water creature would be taken to the water). These children then became helpful ‘aumakua to the family (Pukui and Handy, 1998).

Mana (Supernatural or Divine Power, Life Force)

Mana is defined as authority, privilege and power that might be divine or miraculous. A secondary definition is given as a branch, limb, crotch, or crosspiece. In the tradition of doubled meanings, *manu weu lani* is a term for a chief but literally means a “branch with divine foliage.”

Ho’omana means an act of worship, perhaps as a process of connecting with spiritual energy or power. *Na akua* and *na ali’i* (male and female gods and chiefs) possess mana. So do ordinary people, pohaku (rocks), and other beings and objects.

In ordinary conversation, a Kanaka Maoli might speak of the mana of a person, place or a thing or might refer to a person or object as having the mana of a certain place. Mana is exchanged in the *ha* (breath) of the *honi* (the Hawaiian way of greeting, nose to nose, inhaling). Personal mana can be increased by adopting certain breathing patterns, to power a prayer or perform some other task. I have not come across explicit written references to the exchange of mana during lovemaking, though I have heard lovers speak of this (including my own).

Mana was most important with regard to chiefly mating and genealogies, . Male and female chiefs mated first to produce children with the highest possible mana. This was determined by the genealogies of the two partners (Pukui and Handy, 1998; Klieger, 1998). Genealogies of the chiefs (and of all Maoli, actually) originated with the gods, Papa and Wakea. Chiefly women usually had their sexual activities curtailed until they had produced a child or children with the appropriate high status partner. At times, this might mean a mating of brother and sister of the *ni’au pi’o* rank, siblings who are themselves the offspring of a full or half-brother and sister union (Pukui and Elbert, 1985). This is known as *pi’o* (mating in an arch) (Pukui and Elbert, 1985; Klieger, 1998). High status chiefs who had children with commoners might sometimes require the destruction of those children, or might raise them as lower status retainers (Pukui and Handy, 1998).

The status of a chief’s partner might affect sexual practices. Out of twenty-seven mates, Kamehameha I had one who outranked him: his niece, Keopuolani. Even as a baby, Keopuolani had such *kapu* (sacredness) associated with her status that “no regular chief or commoner would dare touch or even approach her, lest the transgressor be burned to death” (Klieger, 1998). Because of her higher status, Kamehameha I had to remove his *malo* (loincloth) in her presence (Klieger, 1998). He could not be higher than her at any time, so she must have been on top during sexual intercourse (Jensen and Jensen, 2005). They produced three extremely high ranking children: Liholiho (Kamehameha II), Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III), and a daughter, Nahi’ena’ena. The last two siblings were devoted to each other and were destined to be mated.

In a *pi’o* union, Kauikeaouli and Nahi’ena’ena defied Christian authorities and produced a child of the highest possible rank. Unfortunately, the baby did not survive and Nahi’ena’ena died soon afterwards. Kauikeaouli was so grief-stricken he lived for eight years in her tomb at the sacred site of Moku’ula (in Lahaina, Maui) (Klieger, 1998).

Jensen and Jensen claim that “Maoli loved - unconditionally, unrestrained, unselfishly, with great respect, with great emotion, eternally through lifetimes. The passion of *alohaloha* (much love) emanated from the Soul, regardless of gender” (2005). And, judging by the passion of Kauikeaouli and Nahi’ena’ena, regardless also of Christian interference.

Na'au and Na'auao (Emotional “Gut” Knowing and Wisdom)

The *na'au* is the word for “intestines, bowels and gut” but also for “mind, heart, affections, mood, temper, feelings.” Many feelings or emotional states are described with the word *na'au*. *Na'au aloha* is a state filled with aloha, benevolent. *Na'au pono* is upright and just. *Na'au palupalu* is tenderhearted. *Na'au kopekope* is hateful and nasty. *Na'au 'ino'ino* is evil and malicious. *Na'au kuhili* is thoughtless. *Na'auao* is wisdom, literally ‘day mind’ and *na'aupo* is the “night mind” and ignorance.

In *Ho'oulu: Our Time of Beginning - Hawaiian Epistemology and Early Writings*, Manu Meyer inquires into the Maoli way of knowing, in which body, mind, spirit, and practical application are dynamically entwined (2004). She interviewed many Maoli *kupuna* (elders) and others who discuss their experiences of knowing and how they know, their experiences of *na'auao* and *na'au*. And as Dr. Meyer points out, in her chapter called “Developing Our Human Potential,” embodied knowledge is sensual knowledge. This brings us back to the concepts of connection and wholeness as fundamental to the Maoli ways of living and loving. *Na'auao* is mental intelligence partnered with feeling, with *aloha*, and with a deep quest for what is *pono*, moment by moment.

‘Ohana (Family)

Kinship and family are overwhelmingly important in Maoli culture. When Maoli meet, they often spend their first moments in conversation trying to establish kinship, such as cousin relationships, or other ties with places and people. When an individual’s sexual or gender expression and/or orientation are at odds with family values (such as when the family is very Christian), family disapproval is perhaps even more painful for Kanaka Maoli than for many other people. Dr. Meyer has suggested that many Maoli lesbian couples prefer to leave Hawai‘i and live far away from family because disapproval is so painful (conversation, 2008).

Piko (Navel, Umbilical Cord)

In Old Hawai‘i the individual “viewed himself as a link between his long line of forebears and his descendants, even those yet unborn” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). The *piko* are thought to be “most intimately concerned with this bond that transcended time” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). In some ways similar to the concept of “chakras” which according to yogic and tantric traditions are spiritually energetic centers in the body (though the similarity I perceive is not necessarily accepted by Maoli practitioners), the three *piko* connect Maoli to (1) their ancestors, through the crown of the head, (2) present day family, through the umbilical cord and navel and (3) their descendants, through the genitals. Genitals were given special care and sung about because of their sacred reproductive importance.

Pili'ana (Connection and Relationship)

Pili means to cling, adhere, touch, join to or belong to, or indicates a close relationship. *Pili'ana* is connection. *Pili'alo*ha is a close friendship or lover, or the condition of being in such a relationship. *Ho'opili* is the act of creating a relationship, while the *hoa pili* is an intimate friend. *He pili wehena 'ole* is a close relationship that cannot be broken, but to *hehi i ka pili, wehe i ka pili* is to end a relationship. Unlike Western culture, where “clingy” lovers are looked upon with suspicion, the Maoli culture tenderly accepts the ties that bind people together.

But connection is more than something shared between people. Mary Kawena Pukui and E.S. Craighill Handy wrote, “to comprehend the psyche of our old Hawaiians, it is necessary to enlarge the implications of the word ‘relationship’ beyond the limitations of the ‘interpersonal’ or social. The subjective relationships that dominate the Polynesian psyche are with all nature, in its totality, and all its parts separately apprehended and sensed as personal” (1999). In *Man, Gods and Nature* (1990), Michael Kioni Dudley has said, “in the Hawaiian view the world is alive, conscious, and able to be communicated with, and it has to be dealt with that way. Man participates in a community with all of the species of nature, a community in which all beings have rights and responsibilities to each other.”

Nyrell Pattell describes the “four principles of Aboriginal being” as wholeness (“everything is connected”), constant change, cyclical patterns of change, and the reality of both physical and spiritual realms (2007).

Along with other aspects of daily life, intimate sexual relationships were conducted within this context of greater connection. Additional types of connection, such as connection with ancestors and genealogy, were particularly important for the *ali’i* (male and female chiefs), who had responsibilities for creating high status (and high mana) children through their relationships.

Imagine, if you will, the cultural and personal shock that must have been felt by Maoli when encountering the Western people, who come from a culture which did not, and still does not, place as high a value on connection - a culture which in fact does continuous violence to all kinds of connections with people, nature and spirit. This is a profound difference between Western and Maoli culture, and this difference has an impact on how we view and engage in intimate behavior and its aftermath.

Pono (Balance, Righteousness, Appropriateness)

Jensen and Jensen equate pono with grace (2005). The dictionary says it is “goodness, uprightness, morality... fitting, proper, righteous, right... fair, beneficial, in perfect order.” The idea of balance is implied. It can also mean hope. To *ho’oponopono* is to clean or set right. It is also a formal and traditional process of conflict resolution among family or community members which can also serve as a spiritual practice (workshops with Ramsay Taum, 2003 and 2005; Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Sexual Education

Children were prepared for and instructed in sexual intimacy in a variety of ways. As genitals were considered precious and sacred, the genitals of infants and children were given special attention. This was especially true of first-born children, who were assumed to be the first of the next generation to also reproduce. Girl’s genitals were “molded,” usually with the help of mother’s milk, which was squirted into the vagina, and kukui nut oil, which was rubbed on the vulva. The object was to press the labia together until they were neat and compact and did not separate. This was done for hygienic reasons as well as for the child’s future pleasure (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Boys were prepared for *kahe ule* (subincision of the penis) through a daily ritual of blowing into the foreskin until it loosened easily. When the boy could urinate in an arch, the blowing happened less often but was still done until the boy was about six or seven years old and ready for subincision (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). In Hawai’i, subincision was not an “initiation” or coming of age ritual. The purpose was simply to “facilitate cohabitation and enhance the pleasure enjoyed” (Pukui and Handy, 1998).

In daily life, children observed and learned many sociosexual things, such as kapu restrictions with regard to mating, birth control tips, social attitudes, lovemaking practices, acceptable behavior, and sexual humor (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Child sex play was not usually discouraged, except intercourse was not allowed for girls who had not yet menstruated. Among commoners, the grandparents had responsibility for instructing children in sex education. Young boys learned from their grandfather and young girls were often instructed by their grandmothers in such things as the contractions of pelvic muscles. Grandmothers also were responsible for breaking the hymen, so the girls wouldn’t be hurt later and so that their male partners would not be exposed to blood (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Young chiefs usually had their formal instruction from an *ali’i wahine* (chiefly woman) (Jensen and Jensen, 2005, Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Families slept together in the *Hale Noa*, but a man did not usually sleep between two women, unless both were his mates. Adults would have sex late at night, while the children were sleeping (Pukui,

Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Social sexual maturity and sexual maturity usually were in alignment. Adults would observe the development of young people, including their abilities to perform adult work. As young people were given plenty of instruction about sexual and sociosexual matters, they did not have to “wait” to become sexually active once their bodies and psyches seemed ready. A boy could take a mate as soon as he could work in an adult manner with other men (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Women who became pregnant were expected to know who the father was, as genealogy was important. However, sometimes a child had “two fathers,” and adopted the genealogy of both. This was permitted among *ali'i*, such as Kamehameha I.

The Western concepts of trauma resulting from witnessing “the primal scene,” or other early experiences, probably did not apply as sexual matters in Old Hawai'i were open, matter of fact, and accepted as part of life. Pukui refers to the old ways as “positive preparation for adult sex” (1972). It appears that the sexual development of children in Old Hawai'i followed the pattern of child sexual development in sexually supportive and/or permissive cultures, as described by Haroian in her monograph, published in 2000. Techniques taught to children and youth might include:

‘Ami’ami or *ku’ami’ami* - A pelvic and hip motion of sexual intercourse as well as a hula step.

‘Amo or ‘amo’amo - “Contraction of the anal muscles, anal opening, vagina” (Pukui and Elbert, 1986; Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Ho’oha’ilua - Flirting (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Ho’olaulauaka - “Slow rhythmic movement within a tight overlapping embrace” (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Ho’onipo - Slow, swaying lovemaking movements (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Ho’opi’i - Taking the dominant position on top (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Pi au’ou, po’alo, ki’alo - Female masturbation. Words which mean “rubbing,” “digging” or “gouging” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Pikoikoi - Male masturbation with ejaculation (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Expressions of Sexual Desire, Enjoyment and Ecstasy

Le’ā or Le’ale’ā (Orgasm, Joy)

Le’ā is not only “sexual gratification, orgasm” it is also “joy, pleasure, happiness, merriment” and being “delighted, happy, pleased” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). This word sums up the Maoli attitude toward sexual intimacy as an act “filled with pleasure, free of guilt, climaxed with orgasm, lightened with merriment, lifted beyond body sensation with the quality of joy” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Maoli found such experiences so “heavenly” that they named Arcturus, their zenith star, *Hoku’le’ā* - Star of Joy (or orgasmic pleasure).

Other expressions and terms include:

‘A’aki - To feel the pangs of love (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

Ai - Coition, to have sexual relations (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

Aina - Sexual intercourse (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

Ahi wela - Love hot as fire (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

Ano wale mai no ko aloha - Your love overpowers me. *Ano* is also a word for sacredness and reverence (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

E a'o kakou ia 'oe i ke kino lele o ko wahine - We will teach you the flying power (body) of your wife (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

Huahua'i - Bubbling up, gushing forth, the culmination of sexual intercourse. (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Hope loa koko'olua kino - The “ultimate physical union” (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Hui a wela - “Taken by storm” (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Kuko 'umi ole - “Unrestrained desire” (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Na maka ke 'alo kalawe o mea nenea i ka la me'ume'ume a lalo - Eyes are fascinated with the pleasure. The lifting above, the drawing below (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Na 'uha 'olina - “The thighs rejoiced” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Pa kanaka - Carnal knowledge of another person (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Artistic Traditions

Aeae - Chanting style often used for love chants, using wailing, prolonged vowels, and short phrases (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

'Aiku - To eat or dance freely, with no kapu restrictions. Example: *'O ka hula 'ai ku 'ai hele* - a dance completely free of kapu. (Perhaps spontaneous, emotional or recreational dancing?)

Mele ma'i and *hula ma'i* - Reproductive and genital chants and dances. These were most often composed for infants, and so were intended to provide hopeful good wishes for future genital and reproductive prowess (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Kakau - Certain tattoos probably had reproductive significance (Allen, 2006).

Petroglyphs - Some carvings show male figures with long penises, or simple carvings that look like “yoni” or vaginal openings (photos taken by Dr. Lynette Cruz on Kaho’olawe are included in my slide show).

Sexual Refinements

Lei (Adornments)

Lei of flowers or other materials, herb-scented oils, beautifully dyed, decorated and scented kapa bark cloth clothing (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Hinano (Aphrodisiac)

The pollen of the hala tree blossom had a stimulating effect when rubbed on a woman’s *i'o'i'o* (clitoris) (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972; Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Kukui Inamona (Special Food for Sex)

This was a paste of cooked kukui nuts which was sometimes eaten by women to “sweeten” perspiration during sex (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972; Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Kilu'ai and '*Ume* (Sex Games)

The provocative “forfeiture” games of *Kilu'ai* and '*Ume* were popular. '*Ume* was for commoners. “In it, everyone sat in a circle and a leader touched a certain man and woman with his “wand” or stick.” Then the chosen pair left to be together (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

The “more refined” *Kilu'ai* was for *ali'i* (Jensen and Jensen, 2005; Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). There is a *Kilu'ai* sequence in the dance performance, *Holo Mai Pele*, performed by *Halau o Kekuhi* and documented for Hawai'i Public Television. In *Kilu'ai*, “the effort was to win by skill the preselected partner” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Jensen and Jensen describe the game as being played by elaborately dressed people in a huge hall. A game master would select “five or six players of each sex” and there was a tally keeper for each side. The *kilu*, made of halved coconut shells or gourds, was slid to hit a particular block of wood. Stakes were agreed upon ahead of time, and sexual conquests were often the goal. In this way, with much flirtation, double entendres, and spontaneous chants, time with a desired lover might be won.

Scented *Kapa* Mats

Mats were sometimes scented by rubbing in a paste of pounded kukui nuts and herbs (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972; Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Hana Aloha (Love Magic)

Magic was sometimes sought to either inspire a love or to get rid of one. Certain types of sugar cane and fish were used as offerings, usually because their names or qualities were similar to the desired result of the magic. These offerings would be made along with prayers (Gutmanis, 1983).

Constraints on Sexual Behavior

Though Old Hawai'i can be termed a “sex-positive culture”, many sources disagree about the extent of sexual freedom enjoyed by *na poe kahiko* (the people of old). The various islands, or different districts, may have had specific, local customs. It is difficult to sort through accounts which may be tinged with shame or influenced by Christian attitudes. The authors of *Nana I Ke Kumu* describe some of the seeming contradictions in this way: “Sex was a supreme pleasure to be enjoyed; yet ritual abstinence was practiced. Never was intercourse, except during kapu periods, called an offense to the gods; yet the *ali'i* maiden who lost her virginity ‘defiled herself.’ ‘The Hawaiian woman gave generously of her sexual bounty,’ says a modern Hawaiian woman; yet co-author Pukui speaks of the promiscuous *wahine*. ‘Casual intercourse was commonly experienced by Hawaiian boys before adolescence,’ Mrs. Pukui has written; yet the Pukui-Elbert Dictionary lists many Hawaiian terms for promiscuity” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Dr. Loretta Haroian made a distinction between “sexually supportive” and “sexually permissive” cultures. When viewing Old Hawai'i as a “sexually supportive” culture and not as a “sexually permissive” one (as the missionaries did), the contradictions make sense. There were obviously behaviors, which in excess, could disturb the *pono*-ness of a family or community or which could transgress the limits of good taste and acceptable behavior. When a person or a situation threatened to become *a'ole pono* (without *pono*), the family or community would express disapproval.

In *Nana I Ke Kumu*, pre-Christian terms of disapproval for excessive or unseemly sexual behavior include:

Haka kau a ka manu - a bird going from roost to roost.

Ku'ulala - being here and there, not moving in a straight line.

Lelele - leaping from one person to another.

‘O lau niu - a wind which pushes coconut fronds back and forth, kaona for a woman who has her skirts always lifted.

Palemo - the name of a slippery fish.

Pipine - running around, or moving too fast.

Pua’ā laho - a boar, pig testicles.

‘Uha leo’ole - the thigh that does not protest (Brings to mind, “I’m just a girl who can’t say no...”).

Ule ku - erect penis, always hard and aroused.

Some words and phrases from other sources include:

‘Ai pala maunu - stealing “a dab of bait” or another person’s mate (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

He nohona huikau, noho aku noho mai - a life of confusion, living this way and that (Pukui and Handy, 1999.)

Ho’omano - to eat like a shark, to pursue women ravenously (Pukui and Elbert, 1986).

Lemuku - a lover who cuts things short (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Ma’uka’uka - unskilled and awkward lover (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Molowa - a lazy lover (Jensen and Jensen, 2005).

Nani ka ‘ike a ka he;e i na wahi leho li’ili’i - It is wonderful how the octopus notices the little cowries. Sarcastic kaona directed at a man who lusts after young girls (Pukui, 1983).

Incest

Incest rules were distinctly different for chiefs and commoners. The chiefs were obligated to produce children with the highest possible mana and status, and so brother-sister, niece-uncle, and nephew-aunt marriages were permitted at the highest level of *ali’i*. Such unions were not allowed to commoners or lower ranking chiefs. Among commoners, any incest was socially unacceptable - including that of stepfathers and stepdaughters. Even though cousins were often treated as siblings, they were allowed to mate as they did not share the same mother or father (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Pu’e and *Pu’e Wale* (Rape)

Pu’e means “rape, force, attack” and *pu’e wale* means “slimy attack.” *Lolokukui* is the term for a rape victim. A man who attacked a woman was called *holoholona*, a beast (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS AND “ORIENTATIONS”

People in Old Hawai’i accepted many different kinds of relationships, including that of “committed couples.” Kinship systems were important and elaborate and it is not possible to address these in this project. An interested reader will find a very full treatment of this subject in Pukui and Handy’s *Polynesian Family Systems in Ka’u, Hawai’i*. There are also many differences in how *ali’i* would manage relationships, as opposed to the *maka’ainana*, the commoners. Again, a fuller treatment of this is outside the scope of this project.

Aikane

Pukui and Elbert’s Hawaiian dictionary lists “friend” as the first definition of *aikane*, then mentions

moe aikane as the word for sodomy. In *Nana I Ke Kumu Vol. II*, aikane is described as a contraction of three words: moe (sleep), ai (coitus), and kane (man). The authors also point out that “in puritan code, anything other than man-on-top intercourse was thought to be sodomy”(Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Elsewhere Pukui describes the aikane relationship as always being between people of the same sex, but that “the genuine aikane relationship is never homosexual” (Pukui and Handy, 1998). However, there must have been quite a lot of “less genuine” homosexual relationships in Hawai’i, as the usual understanding of the word encompasses sexual intimacy between same sex partners, both male and female. Familial acceptance was also a feature of old aikane relationships, as lovers (with few exceptions) were generally accepted in family circles, and sometimes descendants and relatives of aikane remained fond of each other as well (Pukui and Handy, 1999).

Will Roscoe, who has researched “two spirit” traditions in Native American cultures, has this to say about aikane: “being an aikane was still not the same as having a gay identity in today’s terms. Many men in aikane relationships were also married to women (1995).” Perhaps in Old Hawai’i the male aikane acted in ways more similar to today’s “men having sex with men” phenomena. Old Hawai’i does not seem to have been a culture where it was necessary to have “an identity” based on sexual expression. People probably had plenty of “identity” already, due to strong family ties and knowledge of their genealogies.

Hawaiian legends have many bisexual characters, and often describe same sex encounters. Two legendary women, the divine *Hi’iaka* (Pele’s sister) and *Hopo’e* (a mortal) were aikane. In *Hi’iakaikapoliopele*, Hi’iaka prepares for a journey to Kaua’i to retrieve Pele’s lover, Lohi’au. But before she goes, she begs Pele to keep Hopo’e safe, along with her cherished grove of ‘ohia lehua trees. (Pele burns them all anyway, in a fit of jealousy.) Many love affairs, of all kinds, are described in a gloriously illustrated publication of this important tale: *Hi’iakaikapoliopele: Woman of the Sunrise, Lightning-skirted beauty of Halema’uma’u*, written in 1905 and 1906 by Ho’oulumahiehie in a Hawaiian language newspaper, and recently translated by M. Puakea Nogelmeier (2006).

Aikane relationships were a feature of court life as well as legend. *Kepakailiula*, a chief of Hawai’i, Maui and Kaua’i, was known for both aikane and heterosexual love affairs. He was also raised and adopted by two men who were aikane with each other (Roscoe, 1995). A favorite of the chief *Liloa* was asked about his relationship and replied: “he uses me against my thigh” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Terms for male with male sex include *‘upi laho* or *upilaho* which mean “scrotum bumping” or “testicle pressing” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

‘Aikapa

A friend who shares a friend’s spouse (Pukui and Elbert, 1986). Perhaps similar to *punalua* (below). However, a friend who does this without permission was reviled.

Kane ho’okane and Wahine ho’owahine (Platonic Unions)

In these platonic romances mentioned earlier, the sexual mate and the platonic mate of the loved one were *punalua* to each other (see below). These fond but sexless unions were acknowledged by the family and community. Sometimes they occurred between people who were very far apart in age, but who felt deep affection and connection with each other. Family members would be told about the attachment, and often a feast might be arranged to celebrate it (Pukui and Handy, 1998). As a sexologist, it is tempting to think such a relationship would serve the emotional needs of modern people who identify as asexual.

Kane o ka Po and Wahine o ka Po (Sexual Spirit Relationships)

Maoli believed that some ‘aumakua (ancestors) or *kupua* (spirit beings) occasionally had sexual relationships with human beings. Sometimes the human beings would lose all interest in life and want

to sleep all the time so as to be with their spirit lovers. Sometimes they got sick or died as a result. Sometimes women were said to have become pregnant by their spirit lovers. And sometimes the spirit lovers were helpful to the person, providing guidance as an ‘aumakua would. (Pukui and Handy, 1998). If the spirit lover was destructive, often an expert would be called in to exorcise or ‘*oki* (cut) the connection. Belief in or experience of spirit lovers is not unique to Hawai’i.

Mahu

‘*Alaneo* , a word that means serene and clear, is also the name for “a class of 12 male supernatural beings called *papa pae mahu*, said to be hermaphrodite healers from Kahiki” (Pukui and Elbert, 1986). (These may be the same people who left the “wizard stones” in Honolulu.) There are four words spelled as “*mahu*” but with varied use of the kahako (macron) which stresses vowels. *Mahu*, with both vowels stressed, is the word for homosexuals, “hermaphrodites” or transsexuals (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). Today transvestites are also sometimes referred to as *mahu*.

Mahu were accepted and respected in Old Hawai’i. This is traditional in many Polynesian societies. But this changed during American occupation. In the early days of Hawaiian “statehood,” trans-women in Honolulu were confined to a few blocks of the downtown area, near the Glades nightclub, and were forced to wear buttons that said, “I am a boy.” They were threatened with arrest or bodily harm if they did not conform (phone conversation with “Aunty Anita,” a Maoli trans-woman activist, Summer, 2008).

Though the division of women and men’s work was fairly specific, allowances were made for those who needed to do something different. Men who were not interested in the usual kinds of “manly” work were taught to make and dye loincloths and skirts (which were made out of *kapa* cloth) (Kamakau, 1992). *Na kaula* were female priests and prophets and *wahine kaua* were “battle women” (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). It is not clear if these people “lived as” members of the other sex, as in the Native American “berdache” tradition.

Punalua and Plural Mating

Pukui and Handy define this word as “a relationship between first and secondary mates, not a word descriptive of a type of family relationship” (1998). Prior to the arrival of missionaries, people could have more than one mate. *Punalua* was the word for the relationship of two (or more) people who shared a mate openly and agreeably. The word did not apply to people who shared casual lovers. *Punalua* shared responsibility for children. It is not clear to me if *punalua* could refer to the relationship between a woman and her male lover’s *aikane*, or if *punalua* is specific to two women sharing a man, or two men sharing a woman. In the old days, this relationship was a way to avoid jealousy and ensure the care of children (Pukui and Handy, 1998). As a sexologist, it is tempting to draw parallels to modern versions of polyamory and poly fidelity.

In modern times, women married to brothers or cousins, or men married to sisters or cousins might also be referred to as *punalua* (Pukui and Handy, 1998). Due to missionary and Western influences, it is not surprising that the word now also has negative connotations. (Incidentally, Pukui and Handy refute a 1907 study by Lewis H. Morgan of supposed “Punaluan” marriages, as founded on erroneous assumptions and mistaken notions.)

People who had secret love affairs in Hawai’i risked causing anger, jealousy and hurt feelings in their lovers and mates, just as in many other parts of the world.

Ali’i would be mated to suitable partners who would produce high status children. The betrothal and mating were based on genealogies and were also conducted with elaborate ceremony (see Jensen and Jensen, 2005, for an account of an *ali’i* bride’s preparations). After the suitable child or children were produced, the *ali’i* were free to dissolve the union and take other mates and lovers, or continue the union and still take other mates and lovers (including *aikane*) (Pukui and Handy, 1998).

OTHER EROTIC ELEMENTS

‘Aina : Sacred Erotic Landscapes

According to Maoli genealogies and legends, the Hawaiian islands were created by the lovemaking of two gods, *Wakea* (sky father) and *Papahanaumoku* (earth mother). Thus, the Maoli were aware of the sexual and emotional origin of the ‘aina (the land).

Rocks, mountains, cinder cones, springs and pools, and other landscape features often had names or stories that dealt with sexual relationships or qualities. One famous story tells of Pele’s encounters with *Kamapua’ā*, the “hog child” god. He was pursuing her, and she was evading him. One of her sisters, *Kapo’ulakina’u*, had a detachable vagina and sent it whizzing past *Kamapua’ā* to distract him. He chased it from island to island, where it finally landed at *Kohelepelepe* crater in O’ahu (now known as *Koko* Crater). *Kohe* means vagina and *lepelepe* means labia minor. *Koko* means blood, and apparently the crater does smell like blood at times.

There were stones that were masculine and used to aid fertility in women who spent the night in their proximity, and there were clusters of birthing stones used by the female chiefs. Some stones and landscape features had relationships with each other, such as a rock on the island of *Kaho’olawe* which casts its shadow into a small cave at a certain time of year (story told by Dr. Lynette Cruz, with photos). Such things were noticed by the Maoli and were significant. Incidentally, the old name for *Kaho’olawe* is *Kohe’malamalama*, which means the “bright vagina” of Kanaloa (who is ordinarily a male god of the sea).

It would be fascinating to know the stories behind these other examples of sexual place names:

Ulehawa - Filthy Penis (beach, Oa’hu);

Pu’ukole - Mons Pubis (land section, Hawai’i);

Koheanu - Cold Vagina (stream, Hawai’i);

Kukae’ula’ula - Red Excreta (land section, Hawai’i);

Laho’ole - Without Scrotum (coastal area, Maui);

‘Ume’umelehelehe - Lips Pulling Back and Forth (point, Moloka’i);

(all taken from Pukui, Elbert and Mookini, 1974).

Places which are said to be remnants of *mo’o* (lizard or dragon gods) are also have legendary sexual significance, as are the fresh water ponds and streams where *mo’o* spirits reside. Places which are said to be rocky remnants of giant *mo’o* include *Lai’e* Point (*Laniloa*) and *Mokoli’i* Island, both on O’ahu. *Mo’o* are popularly known as “lizard goddesses” and are able to appear as sexually desirable and powerful women. They were often said to “drown” their lovers after sex. However, *mo’o* were and are important genealogical figures and gods for the Maoli. For a speculative, personal discussion of the *mo’o*, please see the essay in Appendix One.

It is also important to note the four sacred stones left in *Honolulu* by four *mahu* (transgender or “two spirit”) wizards visiting from Tahiti. These wizards were said to be very popular and powerful, and their stones had healing powers. The story of these stones illustrates acceptance of *mahu* in Hawai’i. The stones were first planted in *Honolulu*’s *Kaimuki* district and later moved to *Waikiki*, where they are now found near the beach police station.

Nudity

He he’e nui, ke ‘ula ala.

(It is a large octopus because it shows a red color.)

Said of a man who accidentally exposed himself while working (Pukui, 1893).

Nude beaches are controversial in present-day Hawai'i. I've heard accounts of local meetings in which Maoli are said to argue against permits for nude sunbathing on beaches. While this may be partially due to adopted Christian conventions, nudity also had several shades of meaning in Old Hawai'i. None were explicitly sexual. Nudity in bathing and swimming was acceptable in family circles. Public nudity might indicate you were about to be put to death or that you were being punished. If it was ceremonial public nudity, you might take off your clothing in response to a kapu held by a chief, or as an act of submission or appeal for forgiveness. Sometimes nudity was required in rituals against certain types of sorcery. And if you happened to run into them, the supernatural Night Marchers would refrain from killing you if you stripped naked and lay on your back in the roadway, allowing them to laugh at you. Exposure of the buttocks and anus was also considered the "supreme gesture of contempt" so one did not do this lightly (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

Public nudity was also a sign of deep, uncontrollable grief or insanity (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972).

In addition, *ma'i* (genitals) are one of three sacred *piko* and so were thus usually covered by the *malo* (loincloth) or *pa'u* (skirt) (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). This is another reason why present day Maoli may not be comfortable with casual public nudity.

A Note of Caution For People Doing Research Using the Dictionary

While *Hale Ho'oluhi*, meaning "House of Bondage," can be found in Pukui and Elbert's dictionary, *luhi* actually means "weary, tired, burdensome, work" and so on, and so probably did not have any sexual connotation. Unfortunately, the dictionary does not give a context for *Hale Ho'oluhi*. Pukui says there does not seem to be any record of flagellation or sadomasochistic sex in Old Hawai'i, though there is a term, *ai'ano'e*, which means "strange sex" (Pukui, Haertig and Lee, 1972). My guess is that if there were any record or mention of "kinky" sex, it would be steeped in layers of kaona and probably be unrecognizable as such.

CONCLUSION

The sexual conflicts of contemporary Hawai'i are distilled in one elder's remark about the impact of Christian missionaries in Hawai'i: "First they make us put on clothes, then they take theirs off!" (Marsh, 2010).

Hawai'i was a sexually supportive culture which has undergone rapid, complex and destructive change in the last two hundred years as a result of Western invasion and subsequent conquest by the sexually repressive and restrictive culture of the United States of America. The results have not been happy or productive for the Maoli people. From the first contact with Westerners, they experienced a huge rate of disease and death, particularly from venereal diseases. Suddenly, joyous and carefree sexual expression had become lethal. Research into this topic alone could probably fill volumes.

In addition, the Maoli were subjected to sexual and cultural shame as well as economic theft of their land and resources and theft of their political independence. The formerly self-sufficient islands now import over 90% of their food. The ecosystem is dangerously degraded and invaded by destructive alien species (plants and animals alike). The U.S. military has contaminated huge areas of the islands with live ordnance, toxic chemicals, and even depleted uranium. Resort golf courses pour herbicides into the ocean waters, destroying reefs and aquatic life. Tourism is an economic necessity, yet it strains the already fragile island resources to the breaking point.

Today, many Maoli live marginally. Maoli have the worst health, economic and education statistics on

the islands. Diseases like diabetes and cancer afflict a disproportionate number of Maoli. Many families are homeless. “Ice” (crystal meth) is a huge problem, and no doubt is implicated in the spread of STIs as it is here in the United States. A growing number of “Part-Hawaiian” transgender people and teenagers are sex workers. Teenage pregnancy is a problem, not because families do not love their children, but because the economic situation is so bad that families are increasingly stressed with each new arrival. Maoli are incarcerated at the highest rate of any group on the islands, even though they are a minority in their own land. Many Maoli have left Hawai’i and dispersed over the West Coast of the United States, and elsewhere. This diaspora is troubling to those Maoli struggling to remain on the islands, as more of their own people leave and more newcomers arrive. In addition, people with aggressive political agendas are attacking the few “privileges” that Maoli have - admission to the King Kamehameha Schools, for example, and other institutions which have provided assistance to the descendants of the island’s original people.

In addition, the culture itself was first suppressed by Christian missionaries, then, little by little, taken up, appropriated, changed, and commodified to serve the commercial interests of the colonizers. Hula, originally a sacred art form, now sells everything from key chains to paper cups, from vacation packages to rental cars. The indigenous *Eros* has been stolen and poisoned just like everything else. The Maoli woman now sees a cheesecake reflection in her cultural mirror, one which has been thinned down, and whitened and brightened beyond all recognition.

Within this troubled state of affairs, people still live and love. As the Maoli continue to bring back more and more of their old knowledge and traditions, the sexual and intimate wisdom of their ancestors will also emerge. It is already happening. This document reflects only the smallest tip of a mountain of hard work done by Maoli cultural practitioners and scholars. As a sexologist, I might bring a unique lens to this material, however, I cannot be sure I am seeing what I see in a way that Maoli would find culturally appropriate. Sexology is, after all, a Western invention.

I conclude that there is much to learn, but that learning itself must be sensitive and respectful. Research and inquiry must be *pono*, motivation grounded in a true spirit of *aloha*, in accordance with Hawaiian value of caring and humility, if it is to serve any useful purpose at all.

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APPENDIX A

TIMELINE AFTER WESTERN CONTACT

1778 Capt. James Cook arrives in Hawai'i, bringing venereal disease and rapid change.

1819 'Aikapu religion overthrown by Liholiho, King Kamehameha II, and the regent, Ka'ahumanu, in an act of "free eating."

1820 Christian missionaries arrive. Ka'ahumanu converts to Christianity.

1830 Ka'ahumanu bans public performances of hula, which missionaries considered lewd and lascivious.

1839 Kamehameha III creates Declaration of Hawaiian Rights.

1840 First constitution for the Kingdom of Hawai'i, now a constitutional monarchy. For the next several decades, as a declared neutral nation it begins to establish treaty relationships with dozens of other nations, including the United States.

1874 Public hula performances restored by King Kalakaua.

1893 Queen Lili'uokalani and the Kingdom of Hawai'i are illegally overthrown with assistance from the American minister, John L. Stevens, and one American navy boat.

1897-98 Ku'e Petitions are signed by over 20,000 Hawaiian citizens, protesting proposed annexation.

1900 Hawai'i becomes an illegally annexed territory of the U.S., due to a domestic resolution. Hawaiian language is outlawed during the territorial period.

1959 Hawai'i becomes a "state" of the U.S., in violation of United Nations rules.

1993 Clinton administration admits the entire illegality of the overthrow, and apologizes.

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